

III. Amendment to the Specification:

Please amend the specification as set forth below to correct minor informalities. No new matter is presented by this amendment.

Replace the paragraph at page 3, lines 5-16 with the following replacement paragraph:

Some card issuers have sought to employ rebates in order to increase use of credit cards. Credit card rebate systems, such as the Discover® card or the like, provide a rebate tied to general card usage. The entire benefit is enjoyed by consumers who receive a check or credit on their account. However, such credit card rebate systems provide no particular long-term benefits to the cardholder or the card issuer--especially benefits that relate to the card issuers issuer's business. There is limited loyalty-building to encourage cardholders to maintain their existing accounts or open new ones. Moreover, because the rebate is sent directly to the consumer, who can spend it as he/she pleases, there is no mechanism to encourage the consumer to consider other financial products offered by the card issuer or associated financial companies. Nor is there a way to channel funds back to the card issuer to expand business and cross-sell. This is a lost opportunity and significant disadvantage.

Replace the paragraph at page 14, lines 10-15 with the following replacement paragraph:

The present invention is not limited to a specific type of investment account. A variety of different types of investment could be used such as "e brokerage" accounts, money market funds, general stock investment accounts and employee stock purchase accounts. As can be readily appreciated, this means that the present invention provides

significant opportunities for financial institutions such as investment account providers to market cardmembers on a broad spectrum of investment products that are available.

Replace the paragraph running from page 15, line 7 to page 16, line 2 with the following replacement paragraph:

Transaction processor system 205 is a computerized system, which may be a server-based system, for processing transactions in the credit card- based system, such as consummating purchases (issuing transaction codes, declines, call the bank [“call me”] referrals, etc.), processing payments from cardholders, and processing transactions with investment account providers. Account database 210 may comprise one or more data modules having account data for the cardholders, including investment account data and investment account provider data. Report processor system 215 generates reports or statements for the card issuer and/or investment account provider company summarizing cardholder activity, profits and revenue and the like. Application processor system 220 receives and processes applications for credit cards, and may set up accounts when applications are approved. In one embodiment, application processor 220 could also receive applications for investment accounts, and process said requests or forward them to the investment account provider for processing. Bill processing system 225 prepares the bills to be sent to cardholders, including a summary of charges, balance due, accrued rebate balance, due date and the like. The bills may optionally include investment account information. Credit bureau database 230 may comprise a database accessed for application processing for making the underwriting determination associated with credit card approval and/or investment account approval. Since the present invention is susceptible to

application to debit cards, the aforementioned elements could perform the corresponding operations for a debit card instrument.

Replace the paragraph running from page 18, line 16 to page 19, line 2 with the following replacement paragraph:

A card issuer enters into an arrangement with an investment account provider (e.g., see account database 210), according to step 500. As previously noted, this arrangement may be in the form of a partnering or co-branding undertaking whereby the credit or debit cards are issued under the credit issuer's name and the two entities, the credit card issuer and the investment account provider, have pre-established procedures for handling the processing associated with the accrual and application of rebates to a mutual fund account. Alternatively, the investment account provider and card issuer may not have a partnering relationship, or have any pre-existing relationship at all, but step 500 includes the interface and communication between the two entities for the usage rebate program to be implemented for a given cardholder.

Replace the paragraph at page 19, lines 4-14 with the following replacement paragraph:

According to step 505, the card issuer (or its agent) solicits a general consumer to apply for a mutual fund card. The application is processed and approved by the card issuer (e.g., see application processor system 220, credit bureau database 230), according to step 510. The Card card issuer notifies the investment account provider to set-up a mutual fund account for the approved cardholder according to step 515. The mutual fund account card is linked or associated with the credit card (or debit) account (e.g., see account database

210), according to step 520. The cardholder uses the credit (or debit) card to purchase goods and services from merchants (or service providers) (e.g., see transaction processor system 205), according to step 525. A designated percentage of credit card purchases ~~are~~ is calculated and accrues in the usage rebate account (e.g., see rebate processing system 235 and account database 210), according to step 530.